



LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service
Pursuant to the Federal American Rescue Plan Act, Section 2001(i)

Introduction and Background

As announced in the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE)'s April 28, 2021 broadcast, in March 2021 President Biden signed the Federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, Public Law 117-2, into law. The ARP Act provides an additional \$122 billion in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) to States and school districts to help safely reopen, sustain the safe operation of schools, and address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the nation's students. As with the previous ESSER funds available under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA), the purpose of the additional funding is to support local educational agencies (LEAs) in preparing for and responding to the impacts of COVID-19 on educators, students, and families. Additional information on ARP ESSER may be found in the NJDOE's funding comparison fact sheet.

Section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP Act requires each LEA that receives ARP ESSER funds to develop and make publicly available on the LEA's website, no later than 30 days after receiving ARP ESSER funds, a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services for all schools (Safe Return Plan) A Safe Return Plan is required of all fund recipients, including those that have already returned to in-person instruction. Section 2001(i)(2) of the ARP Act further requires that the LEA seek public comment on the Safe Return Plan and take those comments into account in finalization of the Safe Return Plan. Under the interim final requirements published in Volume 86, No. 76 of the Federal Register by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), an LEA must periodically, but no less frequently than every six months through September 30, 2023, review and, as appropriate, revise its Safe Return Plan.

Pursuant to those requirements, **LEAs must submit to the NJDOE and post on their website their Safe Return Plans by June 24, 2021.** The NJDOE intends to make LEA ARP ESSER Fund applications available in EWEG on May 24, 2021 and LEAs will submit their Safe Return Plans to the NJDOE via EWEG. To assist LEAs with the development of their Safe Return Plans, the NJDOE is providing the following template.

This template incorporates the federally-required components of the Safe Return Plan. The questions in the template below will be included in the LEA ARP ESSER Fund application in EWEG. LEAs will submit responses to the questions within the LEA ARP ESSER Fund application in EWEG by June 24, 2021. The NJDOE hopes that this template will allow LEAs to effectively plan for that submission and to easily post the information to their websites as required by the ARP Act.

Note that on May 17, 2021, Governor Murphy announced that upon the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year, portions of Executive Order 175 allowing remote learning will be rescinded, meaning that schools will be required to provide full-day, in-person instruction, as they were prior to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. The NJDOE and New Jersey Department of Health will share additional information regarding State requirements or guidance for health and safety protocols for the 2021-2022 school year as it becomes available.

Template: LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

LEA Name: Hoboken Charter School

Date: December 12, 2023

1. Maintaining Health and Safety

For each mitigation strategy listed below (A–H), please describe how the LEA will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policies, on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC.

A. Universal and correct wearing of masks

Face coverings

- School staff, students and visitors are required to wear face coverings that cover their nose and mouth upon return to school days 6-10 of their own positive COVID result if their symptoms are improving. Otherwise, at this time, masks are optional.

B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)

Physical Distancing

- HCS will not require physical distancing unless a student or staff member is maskless (lunch) and within 10 days of their own positive COVID test result. In that case, a student or staff member will sit at least 6 feet from others.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- The school nurse leads trainings with faculty and staff, students and families around best practices in these areas.

- Students and staff are expected to wash hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitize at regular intervals, including before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing. Classrooms have built in the practice of handwashing and sanitizing throughout the day and during transition times
- Students and staff are instructed to cover their mouths and noses when coughing or sneezing and to use tissues and throw them away, wash hands or use a hand sanitizer every time one touches one's mouth or nose.
- Tissues and hand sanitizing stations, mostly hands-free, with alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) are set up around the school building.
- Hands-free soap dispensers have been placed in bathrooms.
- Faucets are hands-free.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Facilities Cleaning Practices

HCS has developed a schedule for increased routine cleaning and disinfecting, especially of frequently touched surfaces and objects and between the use by different students and staff. Disinfecting products will be EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 and used according to manufacturer instructions.

Bathrooms are sanitized throughout the day.

Air Quality and Ventilation

- One facility has a brand new HVAC system that brings fresh air into the classrooms and windows are open. In the building without a modern HVAC system, all windows are open with window fans in classrooms to bring in fresh air/exhaust classroom air. HCS is in the process of making plans to install a new HVAC system to replace an aging system in the one facility that was particularly uncomfortable and wasteful in winter months.
- Filters for A/C units are maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations.
- TruSens air purifiers with HEPA filtration and an internal ultraviolet light feature to kill germs and viruses have been placed throughout the building.

E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments.

HCS administration has been trained in COVID-19 Contact Tracing via Johns Hopkins University and has received regular updated guidance via the State and local health departments. Names of students who test positive are shared with the DOH. In the case that schools are directed by the NJDOH to engage in contact tracing again, HCS will comply.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

- Students and employees are asked to leave or not come into school if they test positive for COVID-19 or exhibit symptoms of COVID-19, based on CDC guidance. If they exhibit symptoms, the family will report them to the school nurse to determine testing requirements and return to school.
- If a student or staff members tests positive for COVID, that individual is required to quarantine at home for 5 days following a positive test or onset of symptoms – whichever is earlier (positive test date/onset of symptoms is day 0). The individual can return as early as day 6 as long as their symptoms have improved and they are fever free 24 hours prior to their return date. The individual must continue to mask through day 10.
- We will be accepting home tests this year, in addition to PCRs and rapid-PCRs, if desired.
- Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 will be safely and respectfully isolated from others. The school follows Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting. The symptomatic person and supervisor are provided with PPE. Special consideration is given for the protection of staff members, such as school nurses and custodians, who will be in close contact with students or will handle waste materials. Gowns, face shields, masks, gloves and K95 or N95 masks are available to them.
- If HCS becomes aware that a student tests positive for COVID-19, the nurse notifies local health officials.

G. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies

Specific strategies and considerations for students with disabilities have been critical points of discussion for every return-to-school scenario at HCS. HCS continues to meet the needs of students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible, as outlined in student IEPs. Evaluations are conducted in person while IEP meetings can be held via zoom per parent request. All services would revert to remote instruction should the need arise but at present services have resumed to in-person, onsite. With full-time onsite instruction, special education supports revert to being fully implemented in-person onsite.

2. Ensuring Continuity of Services

A. Describe how the LEA will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students’ academic needs and students’ and staff’s social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services. (1000 character limit)

Meals are available as usual with our food program.

Social emotional learning is critical in re-engaging students, supporting adults, rebuilding relationships and creating a foundation for academic learning. To this end, HCS has engaged in thoughtful planning around the well-being of educators and students and their impact on student learning and has acknowledged and prepared for the potential trauma that staff and students have faced during the pandemic through trainings, community building initiatives and partnerships with supportive outside agencies. Restorative practices have been a critical component of the program this school year. A behaviorist and school social worker have been conducting extensive work with our students and staff to support student learning and well-being. Student risk screenings are administered for students to ensure those who need social and emotional support are identified. For those who qualify for services, treatment plans are developed with both long and short term goals. Progress is monitored by the School Social Worker in consultation with the behaviorist. Grades, attendance, self and adult (parent, counselor, teacher/staff) referral and discipline data can also inform decision-making.

Hoboken Charter School's Multi-Tiered System of Supports will continue to provide academic, social and emotional assistance to all students who demonstrate a need for support. A comprehensive universal screening process is administered in person and/or remotely via a combination of web-based assessments and teacher administered assessments that measure student's current levels of functioning across academic and social/emotional domains. These screeners and assessments identified students who needed to recoup skills from the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. Academic support teachers, special education teachers, the school social worker and the school's behaviorist provide instruction across all three tiers through a hybrid model to individuals or small groups of students. Significant attention around accelerating learning, prioritizing standards, Tier 1 and 2 interventions and "just in time instruction" is being explored by the school

Afterschool programming has resumed.

3. Public Comment

A. Describe how the LEA sought public comment on its plan, and how it took those public comment into account in the development of its plan. Note, the ARP requires that LEAs seek public comment for each 60-day revision to the plan. (1000 character limit)

A Pandemic Response Team was created to guide the creation of Hoboken Charter School's reopening plan, particularly around health and safety measures, and to provide safety and crisis leadership. This team has been consulted throughout the pandemic as we continue to revise the plan. A Social-Emotional and Community Well-Being Committee, a Town Hall, frequent schoolwide communications, monthly Board of Trustee and Parents Association meetings and survey opportunities allowed for communication and feedback. A COVID-19 information page

can be found on the school website. Plans have been shared at public meetings and ample opportunities have been provided for feedback from diverse stakeholders.

B. Describe how the LEA ensured that the plan is in an understandable and uniform format; is to the extent practicable written in a language that parents can understand or, if not practicable to provide written translations to a parent with limited English proficiency, will be orally translated for such a parent; and upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA, will be provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent. (1000 character limit)

The school offers the opportunity for translation services and services for community members with disabilities to participate in all feedback opportunities.